



PEACEPLUS

Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government

Peace



EUROPEAN UNION

Northern Ireland - Ireland

European Regional Development Fund

Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

Northern Ireland - Ireland - Scotland

European Regional Development Fund



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

CANDIDATE BOOKLET

**Programme Officer
Accounting Function (Belfast)
3 Year Fixed-Term Contract**



**Northern Ireland
Executive**

www.northernireland.gov.uk



**Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland**

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FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in a role with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Our approach is simple: We seek the best people, hire them, and provide them with the tools and support they need to realise their full potential. Our role is an extremely important one for society, and therefore we require experience, enthusiasm, and energy to help us contribute to improving the lives of our citizens.

This is an exciting opportunity for a highly skilled and experienced professional to join SEUPB at a pivotal moment in its history, as we implement a new wide ranging funding Programme, and convey the impact that funding has on the lives of the citizens in the region.

We are one of six cross-border bodies set up under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, we have the statutory remit for the management of the EU cross border co-operation programmes, and we are currently concluding on two of those Programmes, while mobilising the roll out of the new successor programme PEACEPLUS.

PEACEPLUS is a European Union funding programme supported and developed in partnership with the European Commission, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive, with a value of €1.144 billion. We consider it a privilege, to have this funding package secured for the benefit of our citizens in Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland, especially in this current economic environment.

We have a wide range of stakeholders as we are directly accountable to the North South Ministerial Council, and we report to the European Commission, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive. We work closely with most of the government departments in both jurisdictions, and key statutory agencies alongside the community and voluntary sector, and the private sector.

SEUPB has three offices, located in Belfast, Omagh and Monaghan.

This booklet provides further information on the key responsibilities of the role you have applied for and sets out the skills and competencies required.

Gina McIntyre

Chief Executive

Special EU Programmes Body

INTRODUCTION

The SEUPB is responsible for the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes and the current PEACEPLUS Programme for the 2021-2027 period and beyond. Our role is to help facilitate the positive impact that European Regional Development Funding will have on the lives of people living across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

We are one of the six cross-border Bodies created under the “Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing implementing bodies” signed on 8 March 1999 (the British-Irish Agreement of 8 March 1999).

The Agreement was given domestic effect, North and South, by means of the North/South Co-Operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 respectively.

We are responsible to two Sponsor Departments, the Department of Finance (DoF) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in Ireland, along with the European Commission and the North South Ministerial Council.

SEUPB Mission Statement:

“To improve people’s lives through partnership and cross border cooperation.”

SEUPB Vision Statement:

“We will contribute to the development of a peaceful and prosperous society; striving to continually improve, drive simplicity and inspire our staff to be the best that they can be.”

Our Guiding Principles:

In carrying out our work we will adhere to the following guiding principles:

- We will deliver our mission, striving for excellence at all times. We subscribe to the principle of accountability and are prepared to be held accountable for all that we do.*
- We will act at all times with the interests of our stakeholders, beneficiaries and the public to the fore and demonstrate the highest levels of integrity in ensuring the mission of the SEUPB is delivered.*
- We will demonstrate equality and respect in all that we do and with everyone that we meet and work with.*

THE PLAN FOR 2023-2025

2023 will see SEUPB closing the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes and opening the PEACEPLUS programme.

The PEACE IV Programme, with a value of approximately €270 million, has provided support to projects which focus on four key objectives: Shared Education; Children and Young People; Shared Spaces and Services; and Building Positive Relations.

With a value of €283 million, the INTERREG VA Programme focuses on research and innovation to support economic development and projects under the themes of Environmental Protection, Sustainable Transport and Health Services.

The new PEACEPLUS Programme, with continued commitment and funding from the European Union, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the EU, is valued at €1.1 billion.

The objective of the PEACEPLUS Programme is to build peace and prosperity and leave a lasting and tangible legacy across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The Programme will help to address many long-standing social and economic challenges which have, and continue to impact on communities, particularly those in rural border areas, as well as ongoing challenges that exist in urban settings.

PEACEPLUS has been divided into six funded themes:

1. Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities
2. Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation
3. Empowering and Investing in our Young People
4. Healthy and Inclusive Communities
5. Supporting a Sustainable and Better-Connected Future
6. Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration.

Each theme aims to address longstanding social, environmental, and economic challenges. Within each theme there are several investment areas – these will have a more specific focus and target organisations such as local authorities or community groups.

It is vital we continue to provide opportunities for our community to interact and get to know each other by playing together and talking to each other. They must also have the very real prospect of living in a sustainable, healthy environment - in peace and without the threat of violence.

We have adjusted and adapted to a new way of working during the Covid-19 crisis and we will continue to assist projects so they can continue delivering the very important work they do. While the impact of this crisis is being truly felt by all of us, we are committed to doing what we can to assist and we understand there will be difficult times ahead, both socially and economically.

As an organisation, The Special EU Programmes Body is constantly striving to improve service delivery in support of our customers.

SUMMARY OF JOB:

To perform key functions of the Accounting Function role within the SEUPB for the PEACEPLUS programme, as detailed in EU regulations. To manage the cashflow of the programme. To work with Government Departments in both NI and Ireland, setting annual programme budgets and providing financial information. To collate and analyse large volumes of financial information.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE POSITION:

- Performance of key duties of the Accounting Function role within the SEUPB for the PEACEPLUS programme, as detailed in applicable EU legislation
- Budgeting and Cash-flow management
- Financial Reporting & Analysis
- Liaising with a wide range of individuals and organisations, both internal and external
- Maintenance and use of applicable Financial Systems and Project Databases.
- Governance & Efficiency

STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES:

Clerical support staff (where required)

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Accounting Function role

- Process payments to projects
- Perform numerical checks on project expenditure claims to gain assurance over accuracy and completeness
- Prepare submissions to the European Commission including Payment applications, Programme Accounts, Forecasting and Financial Data.
- Record, analyse and manipulate large amounts of financial data using Microsoft Excel
- Record and report on irregularities

Budgeting and Cash-flow management

- Collate and analyze project forecast information, including performance of variance analysis against actuals.
- Assist with preparation of budgetary information for both internal use and for government departments.
- Monitor actual spend against budgets and communicate any issues to relevant parties.
- Monitor cash balances to ensure adequate cash is held to meet payment obligations to projects.

Financial Reporting & Analysis

- Prepare month end financial reports for review by management
- Prepare programme balances for inclusion in the SEUPB annual accounts, including supporting working papers for audit.

Liaising with a wide range of individuals and organisations, both internal and external

- Responding to queries from stakeholders, including government departments
- Follow-up of recommendations made by audit bodies including the Audit Authority, internal and external auditors

Maintenance of Financial Systems/ledgers

- Complete monthly reconciliations of control accounts
- Prepare weekly and monthly journals
- Assist in the development of functional specifications for new systems for the PEACEPLUS Programme and subsequent testing of new systems and functionality.
- Create bespoke financial reports

Governance and Efficiency

- Ensure adherence to/compliance with best practice, Government accounting and EU Regulations
- Identification and implementation of efficiency savings across the team and organization.
- Updating of team procedures and processes as required

The above is given as a broad range of duties and is not intended to be a complete description of all tasks.

JOB TITLE:

Accounting Function Programme Officer (Belfast Based) 3 Year Fixed -Term Contract

HOURS:

Minimum 37 hours per week (excluding breaks)

SALARY SCALE:

£32,880- £34,011 per annum (under review)

REPORTS TO

Finance Manager – Accounting Function

LOCATION:

The successful candidates will be based at the Clarence West Building, Clarence West Street, Belfast BT2 7GP.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA and QUALIFICATIONS:

A minimum of 5 GCSEs grades A-C (including English Language and Maths) *or* equivalent

or

A minimum of Leaving Certificate (Standard/Ordinary level) – 5 grades A-C (including English Language and Maths) *or* equivalent.

DURATION OF APPOINTMENT

This is a 3-year fixed term contract from date of appointment.

EXPERIENCE:

- A minimum of 3 years' experience, gained within the past 10 years, in a financial environment within the public, private, voluntary or community sectors.
- Excellent technical skills with experience using financial accounting systems and extensive experience using excel spreadsheets.
- Experience collating and analysing large volumes of financial data.
- Cash-flow management/ budgeting experience
- Experience preparing financial reports, including both quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- Processing payments and reconciling control accounts.

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

- **Seeing the Big Picture**

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs.

- **Making Effective Decisions**

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. It means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

- Collaborating and Partnering

Effectiveness in this area is about creating and maintaining positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the organisation. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.

- Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. It is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA and QUALIFICATIONS

These will be used for shortlisting purposes in the event of a large number of applicants.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A recognised accountancy qualification with a professional body or working towards an accountancy qualification or a third level qualification.

EXPERIENCE

- Experience working with EU Structural Funds and an understanding of their implementation.

EXCEL ASSESSMENT

A short excel exercise may be used as part of the assessment process. Candidates invited to interview will be notified in advance should this be required.

WHAT WE OFFER

Blended (Hybrid) Working

SEUPB offers a blended working arrangement based on three days in the office and two days homeworking per week. This facility will be applicable to this role after two months, following full completion of onboarding, training, and familiarisation.

Financial

To attract, motivate and retain talented people we believe an attractive, flexible and rewarding pay structure is essential. (We therefore offer our employees competitive salaries).

Pension

The SEUPB operates a defined benefit occupational pension scheme (the North South Pension Scheme) worked out on a Career Average basis.

We have outlined some of the key features of the Scheme below.

Generous pension payable for life after you retire which increases in line with inflation*
The pension amount is based on your average salary during your career and the number of years you spend in employment.

The best way to think about the value of the pension is to estimate how much you might have to save to get an equivalent pension privately via another pension scheme. For illustration purposes, as a % of your pay, the cost of an equivalent pension might be up to 40% of pay per year. This annual cost increases with age (ie. the older you are the greater the % of pay it costs to pay for your pension). So, you'd have to put a significant proportion of your earned income aside to secure such a pension.

As it turns out, typically you are required to make a contribution of between 4.6% and 7.35% of pay per year, with the balance effectively funded by the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish government. There are other benefits payable too to provide protection to you and any beneficiaries in the event of illness or death.

*Inflation is measured by an index known as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures changes in the price level of a weighted average market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households.

Holidays NI

We offer our staff an annual leave entitlement of 25 days rising to 30 days after 5 years' service. In addition to this we also offer 12 statutory holiday days.

Employment Policies

The SEUPB recognises the importance of work life balance and offers a range of family friendly policies and practices for its employees.

Learning and Development

All employees will have access to the SEUPB Employee Support & Development Programme. The SEUPB has a dedicated Learning and Development Strategy in which we provide our employees with the training they need to be as efficient and productive while also offering development opportunities to further develop their career in the SEUPB.

Cycle to Work Scheme

You are encouraged to take advantage of our 'Cycle to Work' scheme, which gives you access to a bike and equipment valued to £1,000 through a VAT-free scheme, for use commuting to and from work.

Family Leave

Maternity Leave – Up to 52 weeks of which 18 weeks is on full pay. We also offer Paternity Leave, Parental Leave/Shared Parental Leave and Adoption Leave.

Healthcare

All employees of the SEUPB and their families and friends are eligible to join a private healthcare scheme which provides a range of healthcare services on a discretionary basis at a low monthly cost.

Employee Assistance Programme

All our employees have access to a fully independent 24-hour helpline to assist with any of life's issues or problems, along with access to an accredited counselling service. (All of which is free at the point of use and completely confidential).

Location

The SEUPB Headquarters is located in Belfast with two Regional Offices in Monaghan and Omagh.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

SEUPB is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from suitably qualified candidates irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

The Body would particularly welcome applications from the Protestant community who are currently under-represented in the workforce.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Eligibility Sift

Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application.

Completing the Application Form

Those candidates who are invited for interview who had submitted their application electronically will be required to formally sign their applications prior to being appointed.

All applications must be made on the form supplied by the SEUPB. (CVs will not be accepted).

Under each of the headings in the application form, candidates are asked to provide a clear and relevant example drawn from their recent work, which illustrates how they match the competence being sought. The information on the application form will be used for sifting and only those candidates who can meet all of the Essential Criteria will be considered for interview.

Shortlisting

The first stage in the selection process will be to conduct a sift of completed application forms against the essential qualification criteria. Applicants who have not fully demonstrated on their application form how they meet this criterion will not be progressed to the next stage of the process.

Application forms are formatted so that applicants are required to demonstrate how they meet each essential competency. The onus will be on applicants who are completing application forms to demonstrate how they meet each competency.

Where a specified period of experience is mentioned, it may be increased by one-year increments as a method of reducing numbers.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated above. If putting forward an equivalent qualification, please provide the type of qualification and date awarded. The date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body. If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Should the SEUPB receive a high level of applications, the desirable criteria may be applied to shortlist candidates for interview. Additionally, a short Microsoft Excel exercise may be included as part of the assessment process for this role.

At the interview

Those candidates called for interview will be questioned on the areas covered in the application form, personnel specification, and job description. Candidates will be asked questions to enable them to illustrate their competence in each of the areas. They may enlarge upon the information provided on the application form or use different information to illustrate the answer. Candidates will be assessed against the essential criteria and key competencies identified as being a requirement for the role.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Applicants should note that starting salary would normally be at the minimum of the pay scale.

Applicants who intend to return their applications by post should ensure that they post documents in sufficient time to reach us by the closing date 10.00am, 31st August 2023

Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. We will accept application forms by either post or electronically by the closing date and time. It is your responsibility to ensure applications reach us by the notified deadline.